THE

Comical Miller of Shaftsbury:

BEING

A Pleasant Account of one Joseph Reader, *who was Try'd last Assizes at* Dorchester, *and Acquitted, before Mr. Baron* Bury, *for Hanging a Highway-Man, he had taken, upon the Spot, in his own Girdle, without carrying him to Justice.*

12 April 1712

THE want of Discretion in a lower Rank of Men has been remarkable in all Ages, but never more than in the present Case, as you will hear by the Sequel. At *Shaftsbury* in *Dorsetshire*, (a Town which gave Title to a fam'd Politician in his Days) One *Nat. Seager*, a Malster, did on Saturday, the 2d of *February* last, take Horse in order to go to *Blandford* Market about 12 Miles off, designing to Buy Corn as usual, but was got no farther than the Plain, about 2 Miles from Home, before he was attack'd by a Highway-Man, and a Pistol clap'd to his Breast, with the Word of Command, *God D——n you, you old Dog, alight and deliver:* At which, Mr. *Seager* being very much terrify'd, got of, and threw the Highway-Man 3 *l.* in Silver, with which that was not all, and drawing his broad Sword, cut Mr. *Seager* in the Left Shoulder; upon which fumbling in his Fob, he pull'd out 24 Guineas more, which he threw him, with which the Rogue rode off contented, leaving Mr. *Seager* bleeding upon the Ground. In a little time after came up *Jo. Reader* the Miller, a Horseback, Whistling as he us'd to do, and seeing Mr. *Seager* in that Condition, ask'd what was the Matter, the whole whereof the Malster told him in short; says *Joseph*, Master, lend me your Horse, as being better than mine, and I'll endeavour to overtake the Rogue; to which Mr. *Seager* readily consented, and said he would come after as fast as he could upon the Miller's: Says Mr. *Seager* he's but just out of Sight, has on a great Blue Coat, and rides upon a Sorrel Horse. Away *Joseph* scoures, with an Assurance to the Malster, that he would take him if the Devil did not. To be short, it was not long before he came up with the Highway-Man, who upon his approach let fly at him, which miss'd him narrowly, going through the Lappets of his Coat; however, not discourag'd, he still pursu'd, and came up with him a second Time, upon which the Highway-Man let fly at him again, but miss'd him; with that *Joseph* wisely concluding the Highway-Man's Ammunition might be spent, clap'd in with him, and knock'd him off his Horse with a good Oaken Cudgel he had his Hand, and so handsomely Dress'd him, that he quickly brought him to his Bow, the Miller being a much stouter Man than the Highway-Man. By that time the Fray was in a Manner over, Mr. *Seager* came up, and found the Highway-Man sprawling upon the Ground, and the Miller standing over him to Watch him: To whom the Miller said, Look here, Master, is this the Rogue that robb'd you, i'faith I have him in *Lob*'s Pound; and will'd Mr. *Seager* to search his Pockets and take his Money again, which he did: But then the grand Question was, What they should do with him? At last they resolv'd, That Mr. *Seager* should go and have his Wounds dress'd, and send his Servants, and others, to help the Miller to carry the Highway-Man before the next Justice. Away goes Mr. *Seager*, desiring the Miller to hold him fast till some Body came to his Assistance: But as soon as he was gone, this Crotchet came into the Miller's Noddle, If this Rogue should recover Breath by lying, and get up upon me, I should lose the Forty Pounds due for taking a Highway-Man, therefore to make sure Work on't, I'll e'en Hang him my self, and so he did; for taking the Highway-Man's Belt from about his Middle, he put it about his Neck, and dragg'd him to a Tree, and fairly hung him up till he was *Dead, Dead, Dead.* By this time came the Malster's Servants, with the *Posse* of *Shaftsbury*; and asking where the Highway-Man was, says the Miller, I have him as safe as a Thief in a Mill; look behind that Tree, says he, which they did, and found him Stone-Dead. But here was the Miller's Expectation balk'd, for instead of Forty Pound, which he expected as a Reward, he was carried before Justice *Coker*, and committed to *Dorchester* Goal. However, Mr. *Seager* appearing for him at the Assizes, he was acquitted, the Tryal having given a great deal of Diversion to the Hearers, who, 'tis generally believ'd, there being present abundance of Gentry, gave the Miller at least Thirty Pounds amongst 'em by way of Encouragement.

LONDON: Printed for *J. Baker* in *Pater-Noster-Row*, 1712. *Price One Penny.*